MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. RABIES IN THE PANTHER; TWO PROVED INSTANCES

Owing to an unfortunate circumstance the *Indian Medical Gazette* for October, 1950, was not received by me until after the article on Rabies in the Tiger had gone to press.

In reply to my enquiry with reference to the opening paragraph of Dr. Pandit's article to the *Medical Gazette*, the Director of the Central Research Institute, Kasauli, Punjab (India) writes to me on the 25th January 1951:

'Between the years 1908 and 1949 there has been a total of 9 deaths due to hydrophobia in persons bitten by rabid panthers as recorded in the statistics of the Pasteur Institute of India, Kasauli, and of the Central Research Institute, Kasauli.

The most recent case of this description occurred in 1949.'

In view of the above it would seem most advisable for all persons mauled by panthers in this country to be given anti-rabic treatment without delay.

BANGALORE,
27th January, 1951.

R. W. BURTON,
Lt.-Col. I.A. (Retd.)

2. AN EXTRAORDINARY FIND IN A PANTHER'S STOMACH

(*With a text figure*)

I am sending you per separate registered postal parcel, a piece of dry wood, broken at one end, and pointed at the other, which was found in the stomach of a large panther I shot on 3-10-1950 in the vicinity of Koira, Bonai, Orissa.

Actual length tip to top 9·2″
Maximum thickness 1.2″
,, circumference 3.4″

There was no scar or any such mark on the outside of the belly portion of the beast to indicate that it had been speared from that side. The local villagers, however, told me that the barb seemed to be a broken piece from an implement used by them for digging out edible roots in the forest. Their theory was that the panther in attacking a person or his cattle in the forest had received a thrust with this implement in the mouth, causing it to break and swallow

the sharpened end. There was no scar noticeable in the mouth, but one of the upper small teeth was dislodged.

I would very much like to have your views as to the possibility of any such occurrence as this after examining the wooden piece, and the period it could have remained in the stomach of the panther.

P.O. Bara-Jamda, A. TULLOCH
Orissa,
27th October 1950.

[It is indeed an enigma how such a large and jagged piece of hardwood—undoubtedly some roughly fashioned digging tool or spear-head—could have found its way to the panther's inside without causing any noticeable damage to its mouth or throat. That it had not lodged within for any considerable time is evident from the sharpnesses of the point and at the fracture where the piece had snapped off. They had as yet lost nothing of their roughness through the action of the gastric juices. It must have caused much discomfort to the luckless animal, and it seems a wonder that the points had not perforated the stomach during peristalsis.—Eds.]

3. ON THE 'THORN' OR 'CLAW' IN PANTHERS' TAILS

(With 3 X-ray photos)

With reference to the last line of your editorial comment on my note in Vol. 47 of the *Journal* (p. 718, August 1948) regarding the apparent absence of similar malformation in tails of tigers, I now have pleasure in being able to send you the end of a tiger's tail possessing the same feature. This tiger (male) was shot in June in the Wynaad, north of the Nilgiris, by an Indian gentleman. It was of exceptional size, both in length and girth.

A preliminary examination of the tail by trans-illumination, with an ordinary 2-cell electric torch in a darkened room shows that, while there is no dislocation existing, the curved 'claw'—nearly 1½ ins. in length—consists of four caudal vertebrae; and that, just beneath their junction with the next bone of the main part of the tail, is an opacity which might be mistaken for a totally displaced bone from the vertebrae. This I consider to be, however, a naturally developed lump of dense cartilage if not actually ossified cartilage or tendon (in medical parlance a 'sesamoid bone') developed either by the play of a tendon over a joint, or to serve the purpose of a fulcrum for using it the more easily (the human knee-cap being a constant structure as such). And, perhaps, it is because of this node in the tail of felines that they can twitch the tip independently of the remainder.

In the case of the X-ray photographs of the two panthers' tails, it seems likely that too much attention had been drawn to the dislocations revealed in these small specimens—at least for casual observer to note the slight resemblance to the curvature of a claw in the